A Year in Review

Good Eyesight—
the Birthright of Every Child

1926

National Committee for the Prevention of Blindness
370 Seventh Avenue
New York, N. Y.

HV2330
N21

A Year in Review

Twelfth Annual Report

Mr. George Blagden, Treasurer
NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS
370 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.

Date..... .....19....

I wish to contribute $..... to the work of Saving Sight.

Name.....

Address.....

This Committee is a volunteer health organization supported entirely by contributions and membership dues.

Contributing Member	**$2.00**	**Sustaining Member**	**$10.00—$50.00**
Subscribing Member	**5.00**	**Associate Member**	**50.00—100.00**

Donations in any amount will be welcome. The Committee is authorized by law to receive legacies and bequests.

Publication 32 of the
National Committee for the Prevention of Blindness
370 Seventh Avenue
New York, N. Y.

Let There Be Sight

NEEDLESS blindness in this day and age should be a reproach to civilization, for most blindness is preventable. The underlying cause of blindness, whether it be the result of disease or accident, is usually ignorance. The work of the National Committee for the Prevention of Blindness is, therefore, concentrated largely on pointing the way. Its function is to keep abreast of the scientific advances in medical and pedagogical knowledge and, further, to inform the public generally in layman's language of such advances and how they may be applied practically in preventing blindness and in saving sight.

The National Committee offers this Report as a suggestive graphic presentation of some of its major activities,—activities which could not advance were it not for the continued co-operation of its wide group of members who lend their support to the cause of preventing blindness and conserving sight.

Wm. Fellows Morgan

PRESIDENT

The *National Committee for the Prevention of Blindness pays tribute to its directors:* Louisa Lee Schuyler, 1837–1926; Charles W. Eliot, 1834–1926; *and* Cleveland H. Dodge, 1860–1926.

Eyesight Can Be Saved by—

PAGE

Preventing Eye Infections of Babies 7

Establishing Eye Clinics for Pre-School Children 12

Caring for School Children's Eyes 19

Campaigning Against Trachoma 23

Eliminating Eye Hazards in Industry 25

Developing Publications and Lecture Work 28

Preventing Eye Infections of Babies

THE first and still one of the foremost activities of the National Committee for the Prevention of Blindness has been the prevention of ophthalmia neonatorum, commonly known as babies' sore eyes.

Ophthalmia Neonatorum.—The amount of blindness for 1926 due to ophthalmia neonatorum in schools for the blind is reported by the American Foundation for the Blind to be 12.9 per cent.

The medical director of the National Committee is corresponding secretary of the Committee on Conservation of Vision of the State and Provincial Health Authorities of North America. During the year that Committee and the National Committee participated in a study of the present practices in health departments and in departments of obstetrics in hospitals and medical schools in regard to ophthalmia neonatorum. The following summarizes the replies from the states and territories concerning the practices of the departments of health in their campaigns against ophthalmia neonatorum:

	Yes	No	No Anwers
Ophthalmia neonatorum reportable to			
Health authorities	50	2	
Physicians	47		5
Reporting of ophthalmia neonatorum required of			
Physicians	50	2	
Midwives	47	3	2
Nurses	39	4	9
Parents	34	6	12

Local health officers authorized to			
Secure medical treatment	28	18	6
Provide nursing care	20	23	9
Provide hospital care	19	20	13
Reporting laws and regulations on back of birth certificates	8	41	3
Certificates inquire			
Whether prophylactic drops used	30	21	1
Name of prophylactic	20	30	2
Strength of prophylactic	6	17	29
Prophylactic determined by			
State law	32	19	1
Regulation of health department	27	20	5
Prophylactic supplied by state to			
Physicians	33	18	1
Midwives	27	4	21

The following map-chart indicates the distribution of nitrate of silver in prevention of ophthalmia neonatorum:

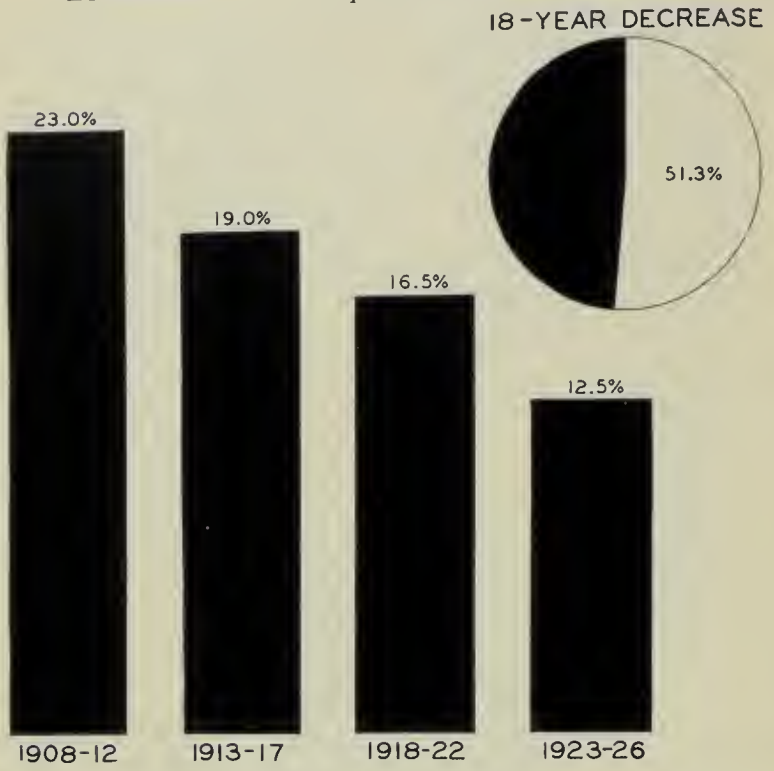
Distribution of Silver Nitrate by States

TO PHYSICIANS AND MIDWIVES	—	30
TO PHYSICIANS ONLY	—	3
TO MIDWIVES ONLY	—	4
NO PROVISION	—	15

Application of Silver Nitrate to Prevent
"Babies' Sore Eyes"

The following chart indicates the trend of the incidence of blindness due to ophthalmia neonatorum for the past eighteen years:

Blindness Due to Ophthalmia Neonatorum*



*IN SCHOOLS FOR THE BLIND

Syphilitic Infections.—At the present time prenatal care and the treatment of certain diseases in the mothers are preventing untold misery resulting from bearing blind or visually defective children. The National Committee during the past year has conducted two joint sessions with the American Social Hygiene Association on the subject of the "Relation

of Venereal Diseases to Vision Impairment."* At these sessions some of the most eminent ophthalmologists, syphilologists and public health officials participated, pointing out the necessity to consider the treatment of syphilis not only to prevent the disease from progressing, but to prevent blindness or impaired vision.

* For details see: *Proceedings* of the Twelfth Annual Meeting of the National Committee for the Prevention of Blindness, December 1–2, 1926; also *Transactions* of the American Health Congress, Volume IV, "The Relation of Venereal Diseases to Vision Impairment," May, 1926.

Eye Clinics for Pre-School Children

PERHAPS one of the most important steps in preventing defective vision has been the establishment of the pre-school eye clinics, sponsored by the National Committee for the Prevention of Blindness. The National Committee's study of the eyesight of pre-school children, started in March, 1925, has been continued, and at the end of 1926 it was being carried on in three demonstration centers, through which children between the ages of three and six years are being given eye inspection and, where indicated, ophthalmological examination. In order to be able to recommend different forms of procedure to other agencies which purpose to initiate eye examinations for pre-school children, the National Committee is trying different methods of administration in the three centers.

Hartley House.—The study at Hartley House, begun in March, 1925, is carried on in co-operation with the Clinton Neighborhood Council. From the beginning the eye clinic has been under the medical direction of a co-operating ophthalmologist. With the supervision of the National Committee, the lay administration of the clinic has been in the hands of a director who has been working with her three assistants. One assists in taking histories and recording findings and the other two in giving the vision tests. The clinic is conducted one half-day a week and follow-up on the cases is done by the agencies referring them.

Ophthalmological Examination at Hartley House

Brooklyn Free Kindergartens.—On November 3, 1926, in co-operation with the Brooklyn Tuberculosis and Health Association and the Brooklyn Free Kindergarten Association, the National Committee's pre-school eye study was started in kindergartens in Brooklyn. The number of children to be examined is estimated at about 250. The method of administration in the Brooklyn centers differs considerably from that at Hartley House. A public health nurse and an assistant are employed on part time. These two give the vision tests and inspections in the kindergartens. The work

is carried on each morning from nine to twelve. Co-operating with the agencies in this project are five Brooklyn

Pre-School Eye Testing in a Brooklyn Kindergarten

ophthalmologists whose services are given outside of their regular office hours. Children who require complete ophthalmological examinations are taken to the doctors' offices and examined there.

Union Health Center.—Late in December, in co-operation with the Union Health Center, the National Committee started a third study of the eyes of pre-school children. Among the several clinics conducted at the Union Health Center is the one for pre-school children on Wednesday mornings, which is under a medical director, assisted by several Henry Street Settlement nurses and by social workers. After a general medical examination the children are referred to the eye clinic. Vision tests and inspections are made by a nurse whose services have been volunteered to the National Committee, and an assistant from the National Committee's office. In the work of this pre-school eye clinic the National Committee has again been fortunate in securing the services of an ophthalmologist who gives one or more afternoons a week at his office, as required.

The Committee hopes by next year to be able to publish statistical deductions based on these three experiments and any further ones developed. Though comparatively a new undertaking, the work of the pre-school eye clinics has already attracted national and some European attention.

Demonstration of Conduct of Pre-school Eye Clinic.—During the recent Annual Conference of the National Committee, a special practical demonstration* was conducted in co-operation with the National Organization for Public Health Nursing, to show how it is possible to examine the eyes of children between the ages of two and six inclusive, even when

**Proceedings* of the Twelfth Annual Conference of the National Committee for the Prevention of Blindness, December 1-2, 1926.

Continued on Page 18

What the Press Sa

Boston Tr

Feb. 20,

N. Y. Herald and Tribune

Feb. 8, 1926

Preventing Blindness

Few organizations engaged in a humanitarian work have gone forward as notably as the National Committee for the Prevention of Blindness, which after ten years of helpfulness has enlisted as members and contributors more than 14,000 men and women, representing almost every section of the country. The committee had financial assistance for some time from the Rockefeller and Russell Sage foundations; it is now supported entirely by voluntary public contributions and it has gained this co-operation without special drives, solely by the merit of its appeal and its accomplishment.

In reviewing the ten years' work of the committee its managing director, Lewis H. Carris, is justly optimistic. "On the whole," he says, "the outlook for the organized effort of preventing blindness in the United States is more promising to-day than ever before, though a great deal remains to be done." A great advance is noted in the safeguarding of children's eyes at birth; ophthalmia neonatorum has been cut in two in the last decade. In the public schools sight-saving classes are now provided for children with defective vision. The problem of school lighting is being studied intelligently. Another distinct and important branch of the committee's activity is the effort to eliminate eye hazards in industry. In all its lines of endeavor it can point to definite progress. Still, Mr. Carris observes that there are in the United States 100,000 blind persons, at least half of whom need never have lost their sight.

The national committee has the satisfaction to-day of moving its headquarters to the building at 270 Seventh Avenue, occupied by the other active members of the National Health Council, where it will be better equipped than ever to continue its invaluable service.

GOOD ANGELS

[From the Houston Post-Dispatch]

No blare of trumpets has accompanied the work of the National Committee for the Prevention of Blindness. It has gone about quietly doing its work. The tenth anniversary of the organization of the committee finds some very creditable achievements to its account. For one thing, the frequency of babies' sore eyes at birth (ophthalmia neonatorum), once the cause of twenty-eight per cent of the blindness in schools for the blind, has been cut in half. The committee has been active in having the roller towel, a prolific source of blindness, legislated out of existence. Work has been done in inducing public schools to establish sight-saving classes, and news-

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Feb.

Protecting A

America's awakening to the need of saving the sight of its people is proved by the fact that without special drives, spectacular campaigns for money or personal solicitation for funds the National Committee for the Prevention of Blindness now draws support from persons in practically every State of the Union. A decade ago the committee consisted of three philanthropists and its work was financially aided by the Rockefeller and Sage foundations. To-day the committee includes more than 14,000 persons, who support its researches and its preventive and educational work.

There are still more than 100,00 blind persons in the United States of whom it has been said that half need never have lost their sight. Methods to safeguard the vision of children at birth, to conserve the eyes of the young at their studies and to protect industrial workers from the dangers to sight that are incident to their occupations are daily becoming better known and their use is steadily increasing. In infantile ophthalmic disorders, to which 28 per cent. of blindness used to be attributed, have been decreased by one-half during the last ten year

These are representative of hundreds

About Our Work

cript

6

s and magazine publishers have been
ed to give more attention to type that
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persons in the United States, accord-
o the report of the society, and the
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of them need never have lost their
according to the director of the
ittee. Had they received the proper
ion, that half would not be so afflicted
. It is gratifying to know that the
is taking more interest in the organ-
work of preventing blindness. This
ittee now has 14,000 members and its
ers and its activities are supported by
ary gifts, with no "drives" and no
ments. Surely, it is doing a worth-
service.

Sun

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erica's Eyes.

e sight destroying roller towel, a
tent cause of blindness, has been
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s. The public schools so ad-
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the past from this cause has been
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demands for larger and clearer
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ill be done, the outlook for or-
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e United States is more promising
an it ever was before.

The National Committee for the
revention of Blindness expects fur-
er advantages to accrue from its
tablishment in rooms in the build-
g occupied by the other active
odies in the National Health Coun-
l. Thirteen health organizations
ith their activities—activities often
elated to those of the committee for
e prevention of blindness—are
oused in the same structure. Sev-
ral hundred local health agencies
ctive in the conservation of sight
hrough preventive and educational
easures are now cooperating with
e national committee in the prose-
ution of its work.

Springfield, Ill., Journal

Nov. 12, 1926

PREVENTING BLINDNESS.

The eleventh annual report of the National Committee for Prevention of Blindness is one of the most encouraging social documents in a long time. Not only has the society increased its funds and resources to a point that admits of extensive research and study but it has learned a number of vital facts concerning eye sight from which the public may profit simply by reading and acting.

During the year the committee conducted the first pre-school eye clinic, the report of which reveals that fifty percent of children attending the clinic, all under seven years, had some eye ailment. It should not be assumed, says the report, that these figures even indicate that half of our school children have eye ailments. The committe's survey of the eyes of five million children of school age show that approximately twelve percent of them have such seriously defective vision as to be handicapped in their school work. There is at present no reason, the committee continues to believe, that defective vision is any more extensive among children not yet old enough to go to school.

The most hopeful chapter in the report deals with the marked decrease in blindness due to social diseases. Eleven years ago twenty-eight percent of the children in state schools for the blind owed their affliction to opthalmia neonatorum. Of those who registered last year for admission to these institutions, only eleven percent were found to be suffering blindness from these causes.

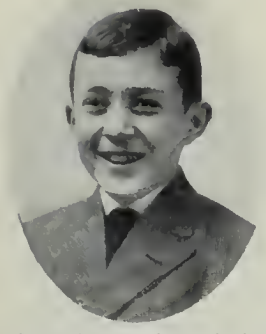
Sight-saving classes have increased in number. Five thousand would not be too many for the whole country. So far there are only two hundred and thirty-four. Courses for training teachers for sight-saving classes have been started in a number of normal schools and universities. The time will come in this country when blindness will be a very exceptional condition.

clippings received during the year

the child is lacking language ability. This demonstration created a wide interest in pre-school eye work, among ophthalmologists as well as public health workers, and much activity is expected as a result of the favorable comments.

A Pre-School Eye Child at Union Health Center

Caring for School Children's Eyes

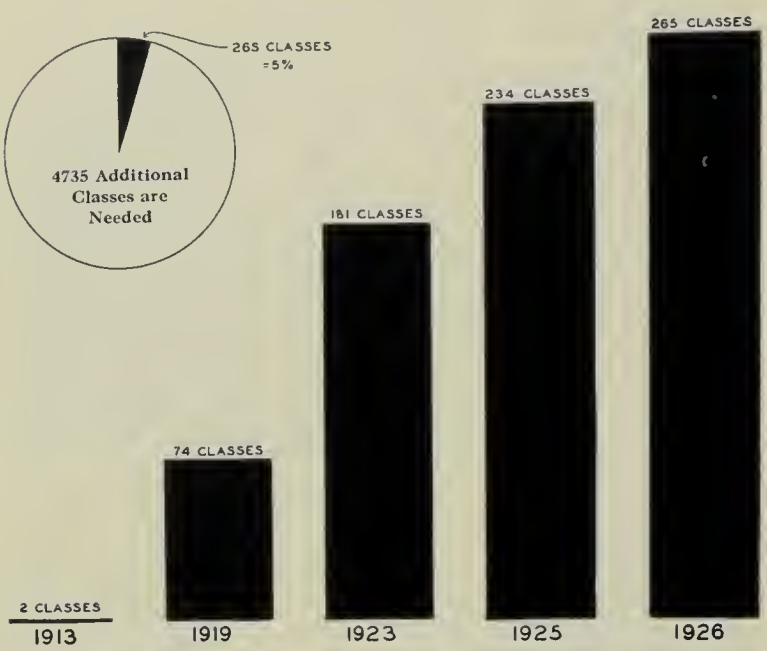


ACTIVITIES of the National Committee for the Prevention of Blindness in saving the eyes of children of school age may be divided into two sections: Activities with school children of normal or easily correctible vision; and activities with sight-saving class children,—children whose vision is so seriously defective that they endanger their sight by taking their close eye work in the regular classroom. Regarding the children in the regular public schools, the same policy of co-operating with teachers and school officials in supplying literature and advice has been followed as in past years. The publication written under the chairmanship of Dr. Thomas D. Wood, "Conserving the Sight of School Children," continues to be in great demand and is considered a source of authentic information by official as well as lay educational agencies. The report of the Jamestown survey, made in 1925, was published, and resulted in keener interest in examining the eyes of school children, as well as in the establishment of a sight-saving class in Jamestown. In addition to customary activities, the National Committee, at its Annual Conference, conducted a practical demonstration with the National Organization for Public Health Nursing, on the examination of the eyes of children of school age, indicating the essential routine and points to be followed.

Sight-Saving Class Work.—The number of sight-saving classes in the United States has grown from 234 in 1925 to

265 in 1926. This is an increase of about 12 per cent. Following is a chart indicating the gradual growth since 1913, when the first class was organized:

Sight-Saving Classes in the United States



Aside from its general activities of promoting an interest among school and lay persons in the necessity for sight-saving classes and in advising, through personal interview, lectures, correspondence and by its publication, *The Sight-Saving Class Exchange*, on the mechanics and technique of organizing and conducting sight-saving classes, the National Committee for the Prevention of Blindness has concentrated on two special projects: The conducting of summer session courses on Eye Hygiene and Administration and Methods in Sight-Saving Class Work, at the University of Cincinnati,

Cincinnati, Ohio; and a brief survey of Myope Schools in Great Britain. The sight-saving course was conducted by the associate director of the National Committee and the director of Sight Conservation of the Cincinnati Public Schools and had an attendance from 16 states, including 31 cities. The course was open to elementary and advanced students. With the increasing interest in and development of sight-saving classes, the need for specially trained teachers is being felt, and the National Committee has been asked in many instances to recommend teachers having specialized knowledge on the subject.

A Typical Sight-Saving Class

The survey of myope classes in Great Britain* was made by the associate director of the National Committee for the

*"A Brief Survey of Myope Classes in England and Scotland," *Sight-Saving Class Exchange*, No. 13, April, 1927.

Prevention of Blindness, in collaboration with a representative of the Cleveland Public Schools. The study was productive of valuable exchanges of ideas and methods between the European and American representatives, and proved a means of evaluating and standardizing present-day methods and administration. The National Committee is coming to feel more and more the international aspects of preventing blindness, not only from the medical and social points of view, but from the pedagogic as well.

Exhibit of a Model Sight-Saving Classroom

Campaigning Against Trachoma

TRACHOMA as a disease and as a subject for epidemiologic study has occupied much of the National Committee's time and energies during the past year. In an effort to arouse the interest in a need of making a broad gauge study of trachoma among the Indians, the medical director conducted two separate tours, one among the Indians of the Southwest, accompanied by some of the most eminent American ophthalmologists; and another among the Indians of the Northwest, in the company of public health officials. In addition, the need for an epidemiologic study of trachoma was the subject of several papers delivered by the medical director, one of which was presented before the public health section of the American Medical Association, and created much stimulating comment. In furthering the conquest of this disease, the National Committee conducted, during the Annual Conference, a meeting with the Eastern Association of Indian Affairs, discussing several different aspects: Trachoma Among the Indians; The Etiology of Trachoma; and the Need for an Epidemiologic Study of Trachoma. That this meeting has had far-reaching effects is evidenced by the requests from voluntary and official public health workers for the Proceedings of this meeting.

The work of the Committee on Conservation of Vision of the State and Provincial Health Authorities, of which the National Committee's medical director is corresponding secretary, consisted of an evaluation of how great a problem

trachoma among the Indians is to the state and territorial departments of health.*

In promoting the etiologic study of trachoma, the National Committee has made available a fund of five hundred dollars ($500) to help in conducting a study now being undertaken at the U. S. Public Health Service Trachoma Hospital at Rolla, Missouri.† It is hoped to discover by this study the cause of this dreadful scourge that is affecting the eyes of thousands of Indians as well as of white persons.

A Typical Grass House Still Used by Some Indians

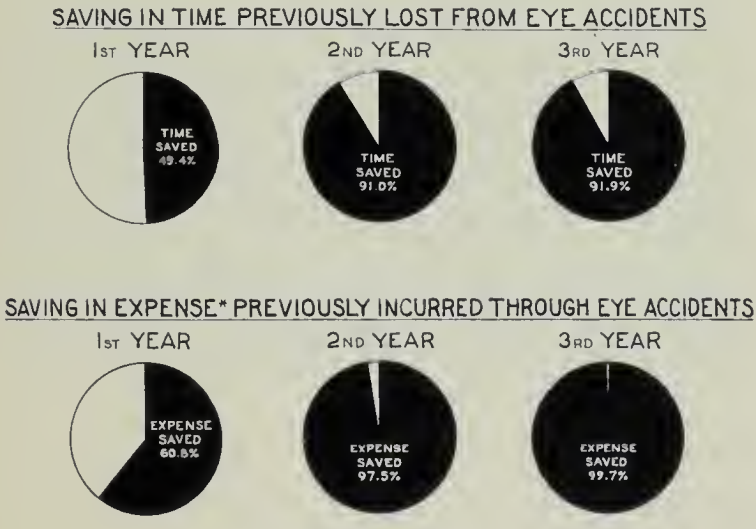
* The findings of this questionnaire study are available in the annual *Transactions* of the State and Provincial Health Authorities of North America for 1926.

† This work is briefly described in an article appearing on page 72 of the *Proceedings* of the Twelfth Annual Conference of the National Committee for the Prevention of Blindness, December 1–2, 1926, which is available upon request.

Eliminating Eye Hazards in Industry

THE limited information available indicates that hundreds, if not thousands, of eyes and millions of dollars are lost annually because of the eye hazards of industrial occupations. Any permanent reduction or eradication of these hazards calls for the provision and use of mechanical safety devices, the provision of adequate lighting and sanitary facilities, and the continued education of employers, employees and governmental officials as to the necessity for and conscientious use of these provisions. The National Committee has during the last year continued to promote these principles.

Results of Establishing Eye Room in an Industrial Plant



* COMPENSATION AND SPECIALISTS FEES

Addressing West Side Continuation School, New York City

The handbook, *Eye Hazards in Industrial Occupations*, by Louis Resnick and Lewis H. Carris, published by the National Committee, is now being used by some 3,000 industrial physicians, safety engineers, executives and supervisory officials as a guide in the organization of sight conservation in industry. In addition, through co-operation with the continuation schools, social agencies and public health organizations, lectures on the care of the eyes have been given to young men and women just entering industrial and commercial life.

Another effective undertaking in this field has been the training course for safety engineers—the first collegiate course of its kind—given at New York University in co-operation with the American Museum of Safety. Assisting in this course, which will be repeated during the year 1927–28, is a staff member of the National Committee for the Prevention of Blindness.

The Committee has co-operated further with the American Museum of Safety in the conducting of a nation-wide study of causes of fireworks accidents, one result of which was the agreement of fireworks manufacturers to discontinue making certain of the most dangerous fireworks and to insert cautions concerning fireworks in packing them.

Avoiding an Eye Accident in Industry

Publications and Lecture Work

THE increase to almost a million in the circularization of publications and the increasing demand for them are further indications of the advances of the work of the National Committee for the Prevention of Blindness. During the year there were distributed 966,367 publications. These included bookmarks, bookplates, periodicals, folders, reprints and bulletins, of which 3,585 were sold at cost.

Publications.—New publications during the year include: *The Eleventh Annual Report; Methods of Teaching Sight-Saving Classes*, by Estella Lawes; five issues of the *News Letter;* five issues of the *Sight-Saving Class Exchange*, and four issues of the *Junior News Letter*. In addition, members of the staff have had articles on prevention of blindness published in various public health, industrial, and pedagogic journals as well as newspapers.

Charts.—An innovation was made by the National Committee in the preparation of a series of graphic charts regarding its work. These charts, for exhibit purposes, pertain to the following subjects: "Babies' Sore Eyes"; "Eye Hazards in Industry"; "Sight-Saving Classes in the United States"; and "Take Care of Your Eyes." They are loaned out upon request to organizations carrying on prevention of blindness campaigns or any health campaigns in which saving sight is a part. During the past year they were used at the Sesquicentennial at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the American

Health Congress Exhibit at Atlantic City, New Jersey, the Annual Meeting of the National Conference of Social Work in Cleveland, Ohio, the Annual Conference of the National Committee for the Prevention of Blindness in New York City, and at a number of local exhibitions.

Lectures.—With the increasing popularity of the radio, talks are reaching a wider and larger audience. That this is true is evidenced by the number of inquiries following the seven radio talks given by staff members of the National Committee during the year. In addition to these audiences, approximately 50,000 persons attended 448 lectures given by staff members before organizations, schools, clubs and medical societies throughout the United States making requests for talks on the various phases of prevention of blindness work.

Finances

Treasurer's Statement of Receipts and Disbursements
Year 1926

Receipts

Memberships	$26,577.50	
Donations	85,039.61	
Cleveland Community Fund	1,000.00	
Legacy	250.00	
Interest on Investments	2,875.00	
Interest on Bank Balances	620.09	
Refunds and other Receipts	143.01	
Sale of Publications	611.15	
Total Receipts		$117,116.36
Balance on hand, December 31, 1925		34,542.87*
		$151,659.23

Disbursements

Budget Expenses, January 1, 1926, to December 31, 1926	$100,000.00†	
Balance on hand, December 31, 1926	51,659.23*	$151,659.23

* The pressing demands upon the Committee for its various national services require that there shall be maintained a balance sufficient to meet regular and special expenses for a number of months in advance. The major portion of the two balances given above, $34,542.87 on hand December 31, 1925, and $51,659.23 on hand December 31, 1926, was carried over for this purpose. In this way the Committee endeavors to safeguard its work each year during the months of June, July, August and September when contributions from members and donors are necessarily small and demands for services are large.

† This sum of $100,000.00 was regularly budgeted to the Managing Director by the Executive Committee, and was expended solely for items appearing in the annual and monthly budgets. All expenditures are made on a modern annual and monthly budget system. The Managing Director is required by the Executive Committee to submit a detailed statement of proposed expenditures and to account carefully for expenditures made under budget limitations. Proper vouchers are on file for every expenditure.

Managing Director's Statement of Cash Received from Treasurer and Disbursements Made for the Year 1926

Receipts

January 1, 1926, to December 31, 1926, Cash received from Treasurer	$100,000.00
Balance on hand, Special Budget, December 31, 1925	121.30
Balance on hand, Managing Director's account, December 31, 1925	386.70
Interest on Bank Balances, January 1, 1926, to December 31, 1926	72.76
Total	$100,580.76

Disbursements

Administration	$22,000.00	
Education and Public Information	14,692.45	
Medical Research	8,924.16	
Field Service	5,573.83	
Publications	10,000.00	
Editorial Research	3,700.00	
Extension	12,076.51	
National Health Council	500.00	
Office Expenses	8,236.39	
Furniture and Office Equipment	3,434.41	
Miscellaneous Expenses	5,997.81	
Rent	4,864.44	
Special Budget Expenses	121.30	
Total		$100,121.30
Balance on hand, December 31, 1926		459.46
		$100,580.76

There is an Endowment Fund, par value $70,000.00, which is made up of Legacies, Special Gifts and a Reserve Fund for Emergency.

AUDIT

The Executive Committee requires a semi-annual audit of its books. For the year ending December 31, 1926, this complete audit was made by W. B. Dickenson & Company. A copy of this Audit will be sent, upon request, to any one wishing to make a further examination of the Committee's financial operations.

Form of Bequest

I give and bequeath to the National Committee for the Prevention of Blindness, Inc., a corporation created under the laws of the State of New York, the sum of. . . . . .Dollars for its corporate purposes.

National Committee for the Prevention of Blindness, Inc.

370 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.

WILLIAM HOWARD TAFT, *Honorary President*

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Thomas P. Gore
David Starr Jordan
Helen Keller
Mrs. Winifred Holt Mather

OFFICERS

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Park Lewis, M.D., *Vice-President*
George Blagden, *Treasurer*

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